

SENATE BILL 1220

By White

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to scholarships for aspiring teachers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 9, is amended by  
adding the following as a new section:

(a) This section is known and may be cited as the "Tennessee Future Teacher  
Scholarship Act of 2023."

(b) As used in this section:

(1) "Approved EPP" means an educator preparation program at an  
eligible public postsecondary institution that is approved by the state board of  
education;

(2) "Eligible candidate" means a student enrolled in an approved EPP in  
in the student's junior or senior year, as determined by the institution;

(3) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell grant, the  
Tennessee education lottery scholarship, or the Tennessee student assistance  
award;

(4) "Resident" means a person classified as a resident of this state  
pursuant to § 49-8-104;

(5) "Targeted setting" means a:

(A) Tennessee public school located in a distressed or at-risk  
county, as determined by the department of education; or

(B) Subject area for which there is a critical shortage, as determined by the department of education; and

(6) "TSAC" means the Tennessee student assistance corporation.

(c) Subject to available funding, TSAC shall administer a five-year pilot program to award a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship to future educators. The pilot program begins with the 2023-2024 academic year and terminates on July 1, 2028.

(d) To be eligible for a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship, an eligible candidate must:

(1) Be a resident who graduated from an eligible high school or completed high school in a home school program;

(2) Not be ineligible for the scholarship under § 49-4-904;

(3) Achieve a final overall high school grade point average of at least 3.0 or have attained a composite ACT score of at least 21 on any single ACT test date or a concordant equivalent score on the SAT on any single SAT test date;

(4) Be admitted to and enrolled in an approved EPP;

(5) Complete the scholarship application developed by TSAC upon the candidate's enrollment in an approved EPP, according to the deadline established by TSAC;

(6) Complete the FAFSA each academic year in which the candidate seeks to receive a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship;

(7) Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 in an approved EPP; and

(8) Agree to teach in a targeted setting for at least four (4) years after the candidate completes the candidate's approved EPP.

(e) If a student ceases to be eligible for the Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship at any time, then the student is not eligible to regain the scholarship.

(f) If a student is awarded a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship, then the student may continue to receive a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship under this section until the occurrence of the first of the following events:

(1) The student has attained a degree through an approved EPP; or

(2) Three (3) years have elapsed since the date of the student's enrollment in a term for which the student received the student's first Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship.

(g) A student who receives a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship may transfer from one (1) eligible postsecondary institution to another eligible postsecondary institution without loss of the scholarship so long as the student continues to meet all eligibility requirements for the scholarship.

(h) Subject to the amounts appropriated by the general assembly, the amount of a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship shall not exceed the cost of tuition and mandatory fees charged to all students for coursework leading to completion of an approved EPP at the eligible public postsecondary institution attended less all other gift aid, which must be credited to the student's tuition and mandatory fees before this scholarship is applied.

(i) If a student receives a Tennessee Future Teacher scholarship and does not teach in a targeted setting for at least four (4) years, then the student must reimburse TSAC for each year the student did not teach in a targeted setting in an amount equal to the total scholarship amount the student received pursuant to this section divided by four (4).

(j) TSAC may promulgate rules to effectuate this section. The rules must be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

(k) The office of research and education accountability (OREA), in the office of the comptroller of treasury, shall review and study the pilot program created in this section and the Tennessee Future Teacher scholarships awarded through the pilot program to determine the effectiveness of the scholarships in increasing the number of licensed educators in this state. The study must be conducted in the third and fifth year of the pilot program and four (4) years after the program terminates on July 1, 2028. The OREA shall report its findings and conclusions to the speakers of the senate and house of representatives and to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives by December 31 each year a report is prepared.

(l) The Tennessee Future Teacher's scholarship program is repealed on July 1, 2028.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2023, the public welfare requiring it.